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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a teaching approach in which a middle school classroom teacher and a team-teacher by satellite present a course in Basic English and Reading for remedial reading students in grades 7-8. The team-teacher at Oklahoma State University is a "talking head" who teaches on television. The television portion of the course, "Reading in Progress," was created to serve rural and small schools that do not offer Reading or Basic English beyond 6th grade. "Reading in Progress" is received by satellite 2 days a week. The other 3 days, the students work on reading and writing activities, many of which are on computer. The team-teacher plays the roles of the course designer, audiovisual broker, and television presenter. Although the main responsibility of the classroom teacher is encouraging and motivating students, the teacher also reviews completed assignments, records grades, and works with individual students on their particular problems with course content. It is concluded that the course has been successful for the following reasons: (1) it has a regular pattern so students know what to expect; (2) it has a non-judgmental atmosphere due to the technological mode of presentation and a grading system that rewards the amount of work attempted, as well as the quality of the work; (3) it includes activities that build self-esteem; and (4) it has set boundaries for the skills that need to be learned. (KS)

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R.I.P.- The Deadly Art of Team-Teaching with a Talking Head

Education has long realized the needs of "at risk" students who do not fit into the mainstream and are eligible for special programs such as special education, EMH, Chapter I, advanced placement, and gifted and talented, leaving behind the mid-range students in the regular classroom. Often forgotten are the "at risk" students with reading problems who are forced to function at the bottom of the middle. By forming an alliance between the middle school classroom teacher and a team-teacher by satellite, students can receive more variety in instruction, more individualized attention and more opportunities to become involved in the learning process than in the regular classroom. Computer software used in classroom activities and highly motivational televised sgegments create a student who is more receptive to instruction. An instructional strategy designed to insure success and provide instant and frequent feedback from the classroom teacher promotes student self-esteem and motivation.

Traditionally, team-teaching divides the work load into areas of expertise on the teaching staff, or it is divided into presentation and management roles. The teachers may move from room to room, or the students may move about. The course may rotate on a semester or a quarterly basis. But generally, team-teaching involves the pooling of instructional resources to provide maximum benefit to the students.

Team-teaching also assumes that you have a qualified staff, the necessary resources among them to pool, adequate space, and time for planning.

I am a team-teacher. I am also a talking head, which means that I teach on television. I teach a course in Basic English and Reading for grades 7-8 which originates from Oklahoma State University. I consider my situation the "team-teaching of the

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future." This is how and why it works. *Basic English and Reading* and "Reading in Progress", the television portion of the course, were created to serve rural and small schools who do not offer Reading or Basic English beyond the 6th grade. The course is designed for 7th and 8th graders who are reading at about the 5th grade reading level-- the ones who have given up trying, the ones who are "at the bottom of the middle" or "at risk." "Reading in Progress" is received by satellite 2 days a week. The other 3 days, the students work on reading and writing activities, many of which are on computer.

Technology allows the classroom teacher to team-teach with the television teacher across the distance between them. As in any team-teaching situation, a definite division of labor clearly states who is responsible for each aspect of the course.

One of my responsibilities is course designer. That included selecting the textbooks and the software to support them, writing the course of study and writing the Teacher's Manual. Each week the students receive an assignment sheet from the manual ("Assignment Impossible") to be completed by the end of the week. The assignments are on 3 levels-- Level 1, Level 2, and Optional Activities. Level 1 activities are required of all students. Level 2 and Optional Activities may be assigned by the classroom teacher to more advanced students or those who finish Level 1 or those who want extra credit. Six extra units of study are also included in the manual for weeks that the program is not on the air--when the opening and closing of school and holidays do not coincide with the broadcast schedule.

Another of my responsibilities is audio-visual materials broker. During the two semesters of the course, students will use 42 different computer programs. Those programs have been purchased centrally and redistributed to the schools. That allowed us to purchase in quantity, establish licensing agreements and discount prices. Each school ultimately received about #3,500 worth of software for $1,200. Obtaining audio-visual materials also included the purchase broadcast rights for pre-produced materials to be used on the air. Those segments are generally unaffordable at the local level, but they are affordable when purchased by a group.

My most challenging contribution the the team-teaching partnership is television presenter. That includes designing and scripting each program as well as producing all of my own overhead camera and computer

graphics. Each week we spot-check homework on the air and record the scores. I introduce the lessons for that week and explain or review the basic skills needed to successfully complete those assignments.

The role of the classroom teacher is also very well defined, and very simply stated, the success of this class *depends* on the classroom teacher. That person should be highly motivated, enthusiastic, and supportive of the course. He/she should also be certified in language arts and feel very comfortable with using computers. As preparation time is needed as well as time to review completed activities and record grades, it is recommended that this assignment be considered part of the classroom teacher's regular teaching load. The classroom teacher's main responsibility is encouraging and motivating students to do their best every day. That includes working with individual students on individual problems with the course content and having the proper equipment, written materials, and computer materials available for all students. The classroom teacher sends specific assignments to the television teacher to be used for tracking the student's progress and producing a student anthology. Student grades are determined entirely by the classroom teacher.

The class places a great deal of responsibility on the students. They are expected to complete as many activities as possible each week to the best of their ability, use their time wisely, and work cooperatively with other people. Keeping their materials and their time organized is a key to success in the class.

Television has not been easy to adapt to non-motivated, remedial students. The course, however, has been a huge success, and I believe that has happened for four reasons.

1. It has a regular pattern. Students know what to expect. Although the specific activities change weekly on the assignment sheets, basically each week students are reading the same number of pages from the same textbooks and using different sections of the same computer programs to develop reading skills. One activity each week is a "wild card," and it may be a group activity, a writing activity or a computer program developing logical thinking and decision-making skills. The television program is also structured. The Tuesday and Thursday broadcasts have different formats, but the Tuesday programs all contain the same segments and the same is true on Thursdays.

2. It has a non-judgemental atmosphere. Technology itself is non-judgemental. The television teacher is part of a machine in much the same way as tutorials on the computer. The human element is removed along with feelings of disapproval, and disappointment. Disagreement becomes a mechanical response. The role of the classroom teacher is that of tutor, assisting the students one-on-one. Part of the judgemental side of grading has also been removed. Students are awarded grades for the amount of work attempted as well as the quality of the work. In addition, students are allowed the freedom of choosing when to complete an activity before the deadline. A common problem among remedial students is that at some point in the past, they have given up trying to do the work because they feared failure. Often they decide that their self-esteem can be best preserved when they *do not* try and fail than when they *try* and fail. In creating a non-judgemental atmosphere for learning, students become more motivated to attempt assignments that they otherwise would not.

3. It includes activities to do and watch that build self-esteem. Student participation in the program, to reach out through the use of technology, is highly encouraged, and their voices and faces are used constantly in the program. However, if the image they project is not the image they have of themselves, technology can also take the blame, and they are willing to try again. Students answer questions live on the air, read passages for paragraph analysis, and send in their pictures for their school to be featured on the program. Other more off-beat segments on the air make them the envy of other students in the school for being enrolled in the course, such as "Color Sounds" (studying grammar through the use of lyrics to music videos), "Books in the Bathroom" (book reports), and "Theater of the Mind" (listening for details to old radio shows).

4. It has set boundaries for the skills that need to be learned. When remedial students become involved in an activity, they become very focused on that activity. They do not want a lot of extra information; they want to know only what they need to know to successfully finish the activity. Those are the skills that are presented on the air. The teaching segments are short, highly visual and concise to accommodate a short attention span. Students interact live with the television teacher by working through sample exercises to reinforce the necessary skills, an activity which promotes confidence that mastery of the

assignment is possible.

By utilizing the team-teaching by satellite approach to instruction, rural schools can offer more resources, more personal attention to individual needs, and a course offering not ordinarily available in rural schools. As the course concentrates on reading skills and self-esteem, students who complete it have better English and reading skills as well as an improved attitude upon entering high school, and those students who drop out of school have learned the necessary basic English life skills. Rural school teachers have the assistance of a curriculum designer and the resources of a university to reach, instruct and motivate "at risk" students. Rural school teachers and students daily use the latest in distance learning and computer technology for instruction. The course design promotes self-esteem by giving students more responsibility for the learning process with instant and positive feedback. The course design combines basic English and reading skills in a format created specifically for television, stressing the traditional skills in a high-tech approach.